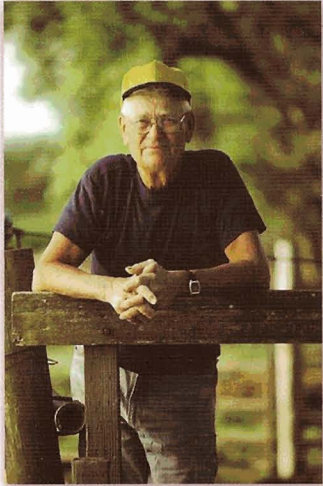


AGRICULTURE



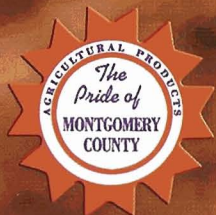
MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S GROWING INDUSTRY



*Protecting,
preserving, and
promoting
our land and
our heritage.*

MONTGOMERY
COUNTY, **MD**

*SMARTFarms
SMARTAgribusiness*

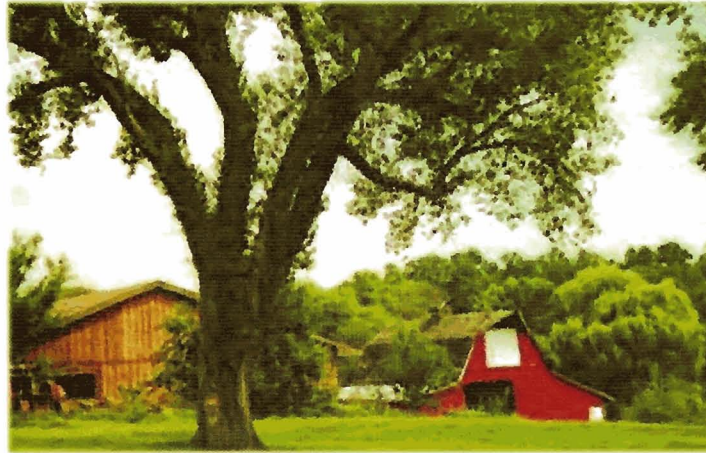


Welcome to the Pride of Montgomery County

Agriculture in Montgomery County is a key contributor to our strong economic growth and our wonderful quality of life. As an industry, the statistics tell a vital story: 10,000 people employed, a national leader in farmland preservation, and a contribution of more than \$252 million to the county's economy. As an environmental steward, agriculture and open spaces keep our air cleaner, our cities cooler, and help to make the Chesapeake Bay healthier.

The County Agricultural Services Division oversees a broad range of programs and educational services seeking to:

- balance economic vitality with the preservation of farmland and open space



- educate and encourage environmentally sound agricultural practices
- promote the sale and distribution of a surprising variety of crops and livestock
- serve as the county's agricultural liaison to the farm community

Equally important, the Division plays an active role in bringing our rural and urban citizens together through 4-H, farmers' markets and the Farm Tour & Harvest Sale. The Division participates in and promotes educational programs that introduce our youngest citizens to a different way of life and a respect for the land and its bounty.

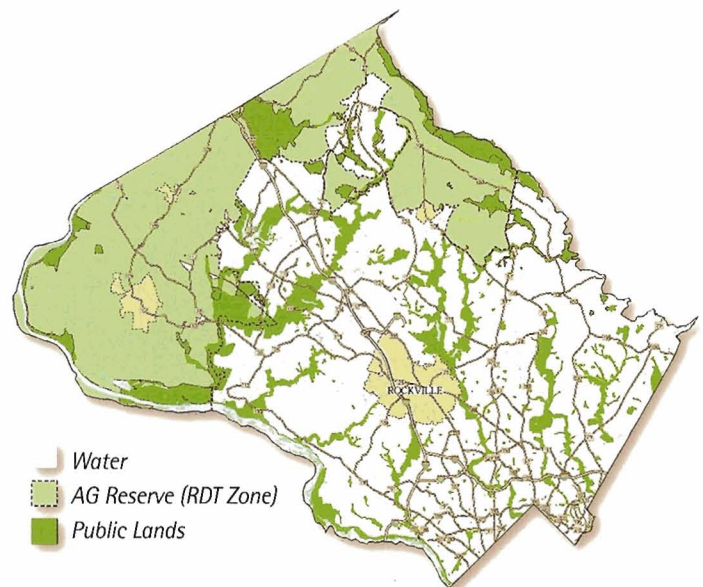
Protecting the Land

While farmland in America is disappearing at a truly alarming rate, Montgomery County has been vigorously protecting this essential resource.

Through a visionary set of programs, funding, and outreach, the county has protected over 97% of the 70,000 acre farmland preservation goal. This represents one of the highest percentages of protected farmland of any county in the country. With continued support, the long-standing farmland preservation goal of protecting 70,000 acres will be achieved, thereby enabling the county to safeguard a critical mass of agricultural lands from development for the future.

The Division implements and promotes a variety of state and local preservation programs:

- Agricultural Easement Program (AEP)
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)
- Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)
- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)
- Rural Legacy Program (RLP)
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Legacy Open Space (LOS)



All of these programs are aimed at allowing farmers to continue farming, families to live on their own land, and communities to preserve the rural character that makes them so special.

All of these preservation efforts are not solely for the benefit of those living and working on the land. Whether you enjoy purchasing fresh locally grown products or appreciate a beautiful vista as an open space amenity, all of our residents benefit from agricultural preservation.



Preserving the Heritage

Montgomery County's heritage is not limited to historical homes and cultural resources. We have an environmental heritage as well, every bit as precious and just as deserving of preservation.

Rural lands cleanse the waters that run down to the Chesapeake Bay. Forests absorb carbon dioxide, reducing ozone and smog. Farmlands stay cooler in summer and offset the heat of our cities.

To reap all of these benefits it's not enough simply to set aside large tracts of agricultural land. These lands must also be managed with the best science and engineering available. The Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD) and Montgomery County Cooperative Extension work in partnership with the Division to implement programs of soil conservation and water quality protection, advances in crop production, and nutrient management.



Joining with other county agencies, the Division administers an Energy Tax reduction program for Certified Agricultural Producers and promotes the use of E-85 ethanol in county fleet vehicles. E-85 ethanol is produced from grain crops like corn, which provides the county an alternative source of fuel and additional markets for local crops.

All Montgomery County citizens, not just those lucky enough to live and work on our farms, benefit from these preserved areas. Rural roads for hiking and biking, recreational lands for camping, and even rural towns for quiet visits all serve to refresh the spirit and clear the mind.

Promoting Agriculture

*With more than
10,000 people
employed in
agriculture,
Montgomery
County is a national
leader for farmland
preservation.*

From over 500 farms and 350 horticultural businesses, Montgomery County produces a stunning abundance and variety of agricultural products. Everything from beef cattle, sheep, fruits, vegetables, and flowers to dairy products, sod, trees, grains, and feed – all are grown here, and most consumed right here as well.

The average farm in Montgomery County is 130 acres or roughly 133 NFL football fields in size. From these farms come more than 430,000 bushels of soybeans, and over a million bushels of corn grain every year. Milk and cheese, wheat and fruits, flowers and trees all contribute to our economy, our landscape, and our dinner plates.

The Division actively promotes direct sale of this vast production by means of 11 farmers' markets, some running year-round, from Bethesda to Gaithersburg, as well as an annual summer Farm Tour & Harvest Sale, opening over a dozen farms to the public. Farmers benefit from retail sales while purchasers receive the freshest produce possible.



You're Invited

All citizens are stakeholders in Montgomery County's agricultural heritage and we invite you to learn more about the Division and its work, to enjoy the rural landscape we're protecting, and to partake in the harvest.

The annual Farm Tour & Harvest Sale takes place every July at selected farms and wineries. Both the seasonal (June-October) and the year-round farmers' markets offer everything from apples to turnips, cider to rhubarb. It's your opportunity to have the farm come to you, so don't miss it.

For locations, activities, times, dates, and directions for the Farm Tour and the farmers' markets see www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agsservices

Come by and visit us at the 410-acre Agricultural History Farm Park in Derwood. This facility serves as a one-stop shop for citizens in need of a variety of services and educational programs offered by the Division, including the partnership agencies located on-site.

Some of these services and programs include:

- Farmland Preservation Programs
- 4-H and Youth Development
- Zoning, Master Plan and Land Use Technical Assistance
- Soil Conservation and Water Quality Planning
- Nutrient Management Planning
- USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Commodity Assistance Programs
- Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP)
- Master Gardeners Program



To learn more about the Agricultural Services Division, call us at **301-590-2823** or visit us on the Web at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agsservices

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

SMARTFarms
SMARTAgribusiness

For more information, please contact:

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